arbitrary principle; for what other name can be given to the blind duty of obeying vicious or weak beings merely becauſe they obeyed a powerful inſtinct?

The ſimple definition of the reciprocal duty, which naturally ſubſiſts between parent and child, may be given in a few words: The parent who pays proper attention to helpleſs infancy has a right to require the ſame attention when the feebleneſs of age comes upon him. But to ſubjugate a rational being to the mere will of another, after he is of age to anſwer to ſociety for his own conduct, is a moſt cruel and undue ſtretch of power; and, perhaps, as injurious to morality as thoſe religious ſyſtems which do not allow right and wrong to have any exiſtence, but in the Divine will.

I never knew a parent who had paid more than common attention to his children, diſregarded *; on the contrary, the early habit of relying almoſt implicitly on the opinion of a reſpected parent is not eaſily ſhook, even when matured reaſon convinces the child that his father is not the wiſeſt man in the world. This weakneſs, for a weakneſs it is, though

* Dr. Johnſon makes the ſame obſervation.

the epithet amiable may be tacked to it, a reaſonable man muſt ſteel himſelf againſt; for the abſurd duty, too often inculcated, of obeying a parent only on account of his being a parent, ſhackles the mind, and prepares it for a ſlaviſh ſubmiſſion to any power but reaſon.

I diſtinguiſh between the natural and accidental duty due to parents.

The parent who ſedulouſly endeavours to form the heart and enlarge the underſtanding of his child, has given that dignity to the diſcharge of a duty, common to the whole animal world, that only reaſon can give. This is the parental affection of humanity, and leaves inſtinctive natural affection far behind. Such a parent acquires all the rights of the moſt ſacred friendſhip, and his advice, even when his child is advanced in life, demands ſerious conſideration.

With reſpect to marriage, though after one and twenty a parent ſeems to have no right to withhold his conſent on any account; yet twenty years of ſolicitude call for a return, and the ſon ought, at leaſt, to promiſe not to marry for two or three years, ſhould the